X. Global stocks and production of fissile materials, 2014

ALEXANDER GLASER AND ZIA MIAN
INTERNATIONAL PANEL ON FISSILE MATERIALS

Materials that can sustain an explosive fission chain reaction are essential for all types of nuclear explosives, from first-generation fission weapons to advanced thermonuclear weapons. The most common of these fissile materials are highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium of almost any isotopic composition. This section gives details of current stocks of HEU (table 11.11) and separated plutonium (table 11.12), including in weapons, and details of the current capacity to produce these materials (tables 11.13 and 11.14, respectively). The information in the tables is based on new estimates prepared for the International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM).[1]

The production of both HEU and plutonium starts with natural uranium. Natural uranium consists almost entirely of the non-chain-reacting isotope U-238, with about 0.7 per cent U-235, but the concentration of U-235 can be increased through enrichment—typically using gas centrifuges. Uranium that has been enriched to less than 20 per cent U-235 (typically, 3–5 per cent)—known as low-enriched uranium—is suitable for use in power reactors. Uranium that has been enriched to contain at least 20 per cent U-235—known as HEU—is generally taken to be the lowest concentration practicable for use in weapons. However, in order to minimize the mass of the nuclear explosive, weapon-grade uranium is usually enriched to over 90 per cent U-235. Plutonium is produced in nuclear reactors through the exposure of U-238 to neutrons and is subsequently chemically separated from spent fuel in a reprocessing operation. Plutonium comes in a variety of isotopic mixtures, most of which are weapon-usable. Weapon designers prefer to work with a mixture that predominantly consists of Pu-239 because of its relatively low rate of spontaneous emission of neutrons and gamma rays and the low generation of heat through this radioactive decay. Weapon-grade plutonium typically contains more than 90 per cent of the isotope Pu-239. The plutonium in typical spent fuel from power reactors (reactor-grade plutonium) contains 50–60 per cent Pu-239 but is weapon-usable, even in a first-generation weapon design.

The five nuclear weapon states party to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT)—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the USA—have produced both HEU and plutonium. India, Israel and North Korea have produced mainly plutonium, and Pakistan mainly HEU for weapons. All states with a civilian nuclear industry have some capability to produce fissile materials.

[1] International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), <www.fissilematerials.org>.

Table 11.11. Global stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU), 2014

State	National stockpile (tonnes)[a]	Production status	Comments
China	16 ± 4	Stopped 1987–89	
France[b]	30 ± 6	Stopped 1996	Includes 4.7 tonnes declared civilian
India[c]	3.2 ± 1.1	Continuing	
Israel[d]	0.3	–	
Pakistan	3.1 ± 0.4	Continuing	
Russia[e]	666 ± 120	Stopped 1987–88	Includes 50 tonnes assumed to be reserved for naval and research reactor fuel
UK[f]	21.2	Stopped 1962	Includes 1.4 tonnes declared civilian
USA[g]	589	Stopped 1992	Includes 152 tonnes reserved for naval reactor fuel, 20 tonnes for research reactor fuel and 57 tonnes declared excess and to be disposed.
Other states[h]	~15		
Total	**~1 345 (57 declared excess)**		**Rounded to the nearest 5 tonnes**

[a] Most of this material is 90–93% enriched uranium-235, which is typically considered as weapon-grade. Important exceptions are noted. Blending down (i.e. reducing the concentration of U-235) of excess Russian and US weapon-grade HEU up to the end of 2014 has been taken into account.

[b] France declared 4.72 tonnes of civilian HEU to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as of the end of 2013; it is assumed here to be weapon-grade, 93% enriched HEU, even though some of the material is in irradiated form. The uncertainty in the estimate applies only to the military stockpile of 26 tonnes and does not apply to the declared stock of 4.72 tonnes. A recent analysis offers grounds for a significantly lower estimate of the stockpile of weapon-grade HEU, however, based on evidence the Pierrelatte enrichment plant may have had both a much shorter effective period of operation and a lower weapon-grade HEU production capacity than previously assumed.

[c] It is believed that India is producing HEU (enriched to 30–45%) for use as naval reactor fuel. The estimate is for HEU enriched to 30%.

[d] Israel may have acquired *c.* 300 kg of weapon-grade HEU from the USA in or before 1965.

[e] The estimate given for the Russian reserve for naval reactors is the authors' estimate based on the size of the Russian fleet.

[f] The UK declared a stockpile of 21.9 tonnes of HEU as of 31 Mar. 2002, the average enrichment of which was not given. The UK declared a stock of 1.4 tonnes of civilian HEU to the IAEA as of the end of 2013.

[g] The amount of US HEU is given in actual tonnes, not 93% enriched equivalent. The USA has declared that as of 30 Sep. 1996 it had an inventory of 741 tonnes of HEU containing 620 tonnes of U-235. As of the end of Dec. 2014, 146.1 tonnes had been down-blended and 0.5 tonnes had been shipped, for a total of 146.6 tonnes. In 2012 the USA withdrew 24 tonnes of HEU from its stockpile of material declared excess for military purposes and earmarked for blend-down; this material is now reserved for naval fuel, bringing the total amount of HEU in this category to 152 tonnes of (fresh) weapon-grade HEU. In addition, at least 100 tonnes is in the form of irradiated naval fuel.

[h] The 2013 IAEA Annual Report lists 190 significant quantities of HEU under comprehensive safeguards in non-nuclear weapon states as of the end of 2013. In order to reflect the uncertainty in the enrichment levels of this material, mostly in research reactor fuel, a total of 15 tonnes of HEU is assumed. About 10 tonnes of this is in Kazakhstan and has been irradiated; it was initially slightly higher than 20%-enriched fuel.

Table 11.12. Global stocks of separated plutonium, 2013

State	Military stocks as of 2014 (tonnes)	Military production status	Civilian stocks as of end of 2013, unless indicated (tonnes)[a]
China	1.8 ± 0.8	Stopped in 1991	0.01
France	6 ± 1.0	Stopped in 1992	60.2 (not including 17.9 foreign owned)
Germany[b]	–	–	3.0 (in France, Germany and UK)
India[c]	0.59 ± 0.2	Continuing	3.2 ± 1.2 (including 3 ± 1.2 outside safeguards)
Israel[d]	0.86 ± 0.13	Continuing	–
Japan	–	–	47.1 (including 36.3 in France and UK)
Korea, North[e]	0.03	Stopped	–
Pakistan[f]	0.17 ± 0.02	Continuing	–
Russia[g]	128 ± 8 (34 declared excess)	Stopped	51.9
UK[h]	3.2	Stopped in 1995	100.5 (including 0.9 abroad but not 23.4 foreign owned)
USA[i]	87.6 (49 declared excess)	Stopped in 1988	–
Other states[j]	–	–	4 (foreign owned in France and UK)
Totals	**~230 (83 declared excess)**		**~270**
Both values rounded to nearest 5 tonnes			

[a] Some countries own civilian plutonium that is stored overseas, mostly in France and the UK, but do not submit an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) INFCIRC/549 declaration, including Australia, Belgium and the Netherlands. The data on civilian plutonium stocks is for the end of 2013 because of delayed annual declarations to the International Atomic Energy Agency by the United States and Russia; their declarations for the end of 2013 were released in October 2014.

[b] This may be an overestimate since Germany apparently reports plutonium as being in unirradiated mixed oxide (MOX) fuel even if the fuel has started being irradiated in a reactor.

[c] As part of the 2005 Indian–US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative, India has included in the military sector much of the plutonium separated from its spent power-reactor fuel. While it is labelled civilian here since it is intended for breeder reactor fuel, this plutonium was not placed under safeguards in the 'India-specific' safeguards agreement signed by the Indian Government and the IAEA on 2 Feb. 2009. New estimates of the efficiency of India's reprocessing plants are much lower than previously assumed. The estimate is for end of 2014.

[d] Israel is believed to still be operating the Dimona plutonium production reactor but may be using it primarily for tritium production. The estimate is for the end of 2014.

[e] North Korea stopped plutonium production in 2007 and in 2008 reportedly declared a stockpile of 31 kg. It briefly resumed plutonium separation in 2009, adding 8–10 kg. Satellite imagery since 2013 suggests intermittent activity at the plutonium production reactor.

[f] As of the end of 2014, Pakistan was operating 4 plutonium production reactors at its Khushab site. Khushab I and II were operating before 2013. Khushab III began operating at some point in 2013 and Khushab IV possibly began operating in 2014; it is assumed that their spent fuel had not been reprocessed by the end of 2014.

[g] Russia does not include its plutonium declared as excess in its INFCIRC/549 statement. The military stockpile includes 6 tonnes of weapon-grade plutonium that is not part of the material declared excess nor declared as civilian and was produced between 1994 and 2010.

[h] The UK declared 100.5 tonnes of civilian plutonium (not including 23.4 tonnes of foreign-owned plutonium in the UK) as of the end of 2013. This includes 4.4 tonnes of military plutonium declared excess and placed under Euratom safeguards and designated for IAEA safeguarding.

[i] In 2012, the USA declared a government-owned plutonium inventory of 95.4 tonnes as of 30 Sep. 2009. In its 2014 IAEA INFCIRC/549 statement, the USA declared 49 tonnes of unirradiated plutonium (both separated and in MOX) as excess for military purposes as of the end of 2013, with an additional 4.5 tonnes sent for disposal as waste.

[j] This is estimated by subtracting plutonium declared as 'held elsewhere' from plutonium declared as 'belongs to others' in the INFCIRC/549 statements.

Sources for table 11.11: International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), http://www.fissilematerials.org and *Global Fissile Material Report 2015: Increasing Transparency of Nuclear-warhead and Fissile-material Stocks as a Step toward Disarmament* (IPFM: Princeton, NJ, forthcoming 2015); *France*: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Communication received from France concerning its policies regarding the management of plutonium, INFCIRC/549/Add.5/18, 15 Aug. 2014; Philippe, S. and Glaser, A., 'Nuclear Archaeology for Gaseous Diffusion Enrichment Plants', *Science & Global Security*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2014), pp. 27–49; *Israel*: Myers, H., 'The real source of Israel's first fissile material', *Arms Control Today*, vol. 37, no. 8 (Oct. 2007), p. 56; see also Gilinsky, V. and Mattson, R. J., 'Revisiting the NUMEC affair', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 66, no. 2 (Mar./Apr. 2010); *UK*: British Ministry of Defence, 'Historical accounting for UK defence highly enriched uranium', Mar. 2006, <http://fissilematerials.org/library/mod06.pdf>; IAEA, Communication received from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning its policies regarding the management of plutonium, INFCIRC/549/Add.8/17, 15 Aug 2014; *USA*: US Department of Energy (DOE), *Highly Enriched Uranium, Striking a Balance: A Historical Report on the United States Highly Enriched Uranium Production, Acquisition, and Utilization Activities from 1945 through September 30, 1996* (DOE: Washington, DC, 2001); US DOE Office of Fissile Material Disposition, National Nuclear Security Administration, Communication with authors, 31 Oct. 2014; *Non-nuclear weapon states*: IAEA, *IAEA Annual Report 2013* (IAEA: Vienna, 2014), Annex, Table A.4, p. 93.

Sources for table 11.12: International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), <http://www.fissilematerials.org> and *Global Fissile Material Report 2015: Increasing Transparency of Nuclear-warhead and Fissile-material Stocks as a Step toward Disarmament* (IPFM: Princeton, NJ, forthcoming 2015); *United States*: National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), *The United States Plutonium Balance, 1944–2009* (NNSA: Washington, DC, June 2012); International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Communication received from the United States of America concerning its policies regarding the management of plutonium, INFCIRC/549/Add.6/17, 6 Oct. 2014; *Civilian stocks (except for India)*: declarations by countries to the IAEA under INFCIRC/549, <http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/>; *North Korea*: Kessler, G., 'Message to U.S. preceded nuclear declaration by North Korea', *Washington Post*, 2 July 2008; *Russia*: Russian–US Agreement concerning the Management and Disposition of Plutonium Designated as No Longer Required for Defense Purposes and Related Cooperation (Russian–US Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement), signed 29 Aug. and 1 Sep. 2000, amended Apr. 2010, and entered into force July 2011, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/trty/>; *Non-nuclear weapon states*: AREVA, *Traitement des Combustibles Usés Provenant de l'Étranger dans les Installations d'AREVA NC La Hague: Rapport 2013* [Reprocessing of Foreign Spent Fuel at the Facilities of AREVA NC La Hague] (AREVA: Beaumont-Hague, 2014).

Table 11.13. Significant uranium enrichment facilities and capacity worldwide, as of 2014

State	Facility name or location	Type	Status	Enrichment process[a]	Capacity (thousands SWU/yr)[b]
Argentina[c]	Pilcaniyeu	Civilian	Resuming operation	GD	. .
Brazil	Resende Enrichment	Civilian	Expanding capacity	GC	17–200
China	Lanzhou 2	Civilian	Operational	GC	500
	Lanzhou (new)	Civilian	Operational	GC	1 000
	Shaanxi	Civilian	Operational	GC	1 000
France	Georges Besse II	Civilian	Operational	GC	6 000–7 500
Germany	Urenco Gronau	Civilian	Operational	GC	4 100
India	Rattehalli	Military	Operational	GC	15–30
Iran	Natanz	Civilian	Limited operation	GC	8–120
	Qom (Fordow)	Civilian	Limited operation	GC	5–10
Japan	Rokkasho[d]	Civilian	Resuming operation	GC	75–1 500
Korea, North	Yongbyon[e]	. .	Uncertain	GC	8
Netherlands	Urenco Almelo	Civilian	Operational	GC	5 400
Pakistan	Gadwal	Military	Operational	GC	. .
	Kahuta	Military	Operational	GC	15–45
Russia[f]	Angarsk	Civilian	Operational	GC	4 000
	Novouralsk	Civilian	Operational	GC	13 300
	Seversk	Civilian	Operational	GC	3 800
	Zelenogorsk	Civilian	Operational	GC	7 900
UK	Capenhurst	Civilian	Operational	GC	4 900
USA[g]	Urenco Eunice	Civilian	Operational	GC	3 700

[a] The gas centrifuge (GC) is the main isotope-separation technology used to increase the percentage of U-235 in uranium, but a few facilities continue to use gaseous diffusion (GD).

[b] SWU/yr = Separative work units per year: a SWU is a measure of the effort required in an enrichment facility to separate uranium of a given content of uranium-235 into 2 components, 1 with a higher and 1 with a lower percentage of uranium-235. Where a range of capacities is shown, the facility is expanding its capacity.

[c] In 2014 Argentina announced plans to resume production at its Pilcaniyeu GD uranium enrichment plant, which was shut down in the 1990s.

[d] The Rokkasho centrifuge plant is being refitted with new centrifuge technology and is operating at very low capacity, about 75 000 SWU/yr as of Dec. 2014.

[e] North Korea revealed its Yongbyon enrichment facility in 2010. Its operating status is unknown.

[f] Angarsk was formerly known as Angarsk-10. Novouralsk was formerly known as Sverdlovsk-44. Seversk was formerly known as Tomsk-7. Zelenogorsk was formerly known as Krasnoyarsk-45; it may be operating a cascade for HEU production for fast reactor and research reactor fuel.

[g] Plans for new centrifuge enrichment plants at Piketon (to be operated by the United States Enrichment Corporation) and Eagle Rock (to be operated by AREVA) have been shelved for technical and financial reasons respectively. Prospects for construction of these plants are now highly uncertain and they are no longer listed here.

Sources: 'Argentina to restart production of enriched uranium in Patagonia plant', MercoPress, 26 June 2014; Enrichment capacity data is based on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Integrated Nuclear Fuel Cycle Information Systems (INFCIS), <https://nfcis.iaea.org/>; International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), *Global Fissile Material Report 2015: Increasing Transparency of Nuclear-warhead and Fissile-material Stocks as a Step toward Disarmament* (IPFM: Princeton, NJ, forthcoming 2015).

Table 11.14. Significant reprocessing facilities worldwide, as of 2014

All facilities process light water reactor (LWR) fuel, except where indicated.

State	Facility name or location	Type	Status	Design capacity (tHM/yr)[a]
China	Lanzhou pilot plant	Civilian	Starting up	50–100
France	La Hague UP2	Civilian	Operational	1 000
	La Hague UP3	Civilian	Operational	1 000
India[b]	Kalpakkam (HWR fuel)	Dual-use	Operational	100
	Tarapur (HWR fuel)	Dual-use	Operational	100
	Trombay (HWR fuel)	Military	Operational	50
Israel	Dimona (HWR fuel)	Military	Operational	40–100
Japan	JNC Tokai	Civilian	To be shut down[c]	200
	Rokkasho	Civilian	Starting up	800
Korea, North	Yongbyon	Military	On standby	100–150
Pakistan	Chashma (HWR fuel)	Military	Starting up	50–100
	Nilore (HWR fuel)	Military	Operational	20–40
Russia[d]	Mayak RT-1, Ozersk	Civilian	Operational	200–400
UK	BNFL B205 Magnox	Civilian	To be shut down	1 500
	BNFL Thorp, Sellafield	Civilian	To be shut down	1 200
USA	H-canyon, Savannah River Site	Civilian	Operational	15

HWR = Heavy water reactor.

[a] Design capacity refers to the highest amount of spent fuel the plant is designed to process and is measured in tonnes of heavy metal per year (tHM/yr), tHM being a measure of the amount of heavy metal—uranium in these cases—that is in the spent fuel. Actual throughput is often a small fraction of the design capacity. LWR spent fuel contains about 1% plutonium, and heavy-water- and graphite-moderated reactor fuel about 0.4%.

[b] As part of the 2005 Indian–US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative, India has decided that none of its reprocessing plants will be opened for IAEA safeguards inspections.

[c] In Sep. 2014 the Japan Atomic Energy Agency announced the planned closure of the head-end of its Tokai reprocessing plant, effectively ending further plutonium separation activity. The plant operated from 1981 to 2006.

[d] Mayak RT-1 was formerly known as Chelyabinsk-65.

Sources: Data on design capacity is based on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Integrated Nuclear Fuel Cycle Information Systems (INFCIS), <http://www-nfcis.iaea.org/>; and International Panel on Fissile Materials (IPFM), *Global Fissile Material Report 2015: Increasing Transparency of Nuclear-warhead and Fissile-material Stocks as a Step toward Disarmament* (IPFM: Princeton, NJ, forthcoming 2015).